



# Napa County

1195 THIRD STREET  
SUITE 310  
NAPA, CA 94559  
[www.countyofnapa.org](http://www.countyofnapa.org)

Main: (707) 253-4580

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-920, **Version:** 1

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Minh C. Tran - County Executive Officer

**REPORT BY:** Jon Gjestvang - Chief Information Officer, Anthony Halstead - Library Director, & Nelson Cortez, Staff Assistant - BOS

**SUBJECT:** Golden State Connect Authority

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

County Executive Officer, on behalf of the Broadband Taskforce, requests approval to join the Golden State Connect Authority and adoption of a resolution to execute the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On August 18, 2021, the Board of Directors of Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) voted unanimously to approve the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), Golden State Connect Authority, for the purpose of expanding broadband access and quality in rural counties. Following approval by the RCRC Board, the next step in establishing this entity is to provide the Golden State Connect Authority JPA to each RCRC Member County for review and approval by the Member County Boards of Supervisors.

### **FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	No
Is it currently budgeted?	No
Is the general fund affected?	No
County Strategic Plan pillar addressed:	Collaborative and Engaged Community Effective and Open Government Livable Economy for All

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

On August 18, 2021, the Board of Directors of Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) voted unanimously to approve the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), Golden State Connect Authority, for the purpose of expanding broadband access and quality in rural counties. Following approval by the RCRC Board, the next step in establishment of this entity is to provide the Golden State Connect Authority JPA to each RCRC Member County for review and approval by the Member County Boards of Supervisors.

Activities within Golden State Connect Authority will focus exclusively on broadband. All RCRC member counties are welcome and encouraged to join. There is no financial impact associated with joining the JPA, and no obligation for individual member counties to provide funds to the Authority, absent a separate agreement to participate in one (or more) of the specific programs. As with RCRC, the proposed new entity will be governed by delegate Supervisors from each member county, and day-to-day operations will be administered by RCRC staff.

The primary goals for the project structure are:

- to ensure that elected County Supervisors retain control of the program, with day-to-day administration provided by RCRC staff,
- to allow for partnership agreements between like-governmental entities for the operation and advancement of the program of work, and
- to attract public and private investment in the program, as necessary and appropriate.

Initial areas of focus for broadband work on behalf of Member Counties will include:

- Foundational Readiness: Ensure all member counties have broadband strategic plans
- Capacity Building: Equip rural counties with information and resources about innovative models and approaches to broadband deployment
- Demonstration Projects: Implement open-access municipal broadband projects

## **NAPA COUNTY WORK**

In April 2021, Napa County began working with consultants to create a road map and action plan to increase broadband in unserved/underserved areas and make the network more resilient countywide. Part of the scope is to identify and plan for grant opportunities at the state and federal levels. In June 2021, the Board approved joining RCRC in their efforts to apply for grant funding for counties wishing to receive support to create a strategic plan to better position the counties to apply and receive grants. After the passage of historic state legislation, which will generate billions of dollars for deployment and grant opportunities, RCRC established the Golden State Connect Authority. Staff believes joining this JPA is consistent with the current work and will

only enhance our ability to apply for and receive grants, including managing regional projects and administering funds. Additionally, the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) counties (Sonoma, Mendocino, Marin and Napa) are anticipated to join this collaborative effort.